1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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Saramacca

WHILE THE RIVER WAS HIGH

The sun stood over the sacred silk-cotton tree toward the Gankwe side of the land. Across the path leading from somewhere in the back of our shelter the parasol ants, each with its strip of green many times its size, made their way toward an unknown spot where no shelter stood, and no one trod. Like a wave the wide ribbon of green rose and fell as it crossed the ridges of the pathway. In unending numbers they came, and the lizards darting in and out of the brush swerved in the direction of the shelter to avoid the marching line, so that at our feet things moved now up, now back again.

While the men were at the landing place, one of the women who was drying rice on the high flat rocks opposite our shelter paddled over in her boat, and, passing the men with a formal greeting, walked on and stopped to talk with us. She was not a young woman. Her time for childbearing was long over, her wrinkled breasts sagged almost to her waist. The cicatrized designs which once had stood out so clearly, and in her youth had been so valued, were but faintly penciled on her face and about her breasts. Had she cared, she might have reopened the cuts, might have had ashes rubbed into them to make the keloids stand out black and alive against the dark brown of her skin. But what need had a woman her age to care? What need to urge life into symbols of fertility on face and between breasts and about her navel, when her time for fruitfulness was over? Of what use to reanimate the incised scrolls between her thighs, when the legend they told in terms of reproduction was for her a dead legend?

She came toward us slowly, balancing a bottle on her head. A faded cloth covered her from waist to knee, and at her waist a bit of the kerchief necessary to the attire of the married woman, even at work, could be seen. She wore a few beads on a cord about her neck, but she had no other ornaments, for ornaments were for festive occasions, and the cloth tied about the neck and worn cape fashion was for women who had children to carry straddling their backs, and woven garters below the knee were conceits of the young.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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484 And after they had inquired of each other's health, they
576 were well past each other, making in opposite directions,
521 but continuing their colloquy.

Bayo said, "I am on my way to the Bakra's camp. I am to be one of his paddlers. Today we start up the river. He is going to the Granman's country."

"I am going to Tunkahai. My sister's son died on the Marowyne. His wife is to come out of mourning. We shall have good dancing tonight."

Bayo's boat was disappearing in the bend of the river.

"Adiosi, adiosi-o. Adiosi, adiosi-o!" he sang out his goodbye, pitching his voice so low and so well that it seemed to penetrate not only the entire river, but the very thickness of the forest which hemmed it in. The response came back to him as a faint, cadenced song.

"Ooo oo oo . . . oo!" he sang out, placing his hand against his mouth to make the sound carry. And the answering call came back true as a bird's call.

484 Now he was in the rapids again, and stood at the stern with dilated nostrils and head thrown forward. When he was through the whirling eddies and in quieter water once more, he adjusted his loin cloth carefully and sat down and
●[137] began paddling. The green-heart trees were beginning to bloom. Fine trees. They belonged to another clan. He and his great-grandfather went for their timber below. There was plenty of timber in this bush of theirs. The gods of the bush were strong, and the ancestors had done well for the country. In a week these channels would be gone. Right about him everywhere jagged rocks would show. In a week, or before then, they would play the drums for the gods of the river, sounding their call to the sun to come and dry and warm them, and the sun, hearing the call, would send his fire to the river banks, and the rains would end.

Was that a boat overtaking him? The cool of the morning was a time to be about. Who was that?

"Tio, greetings," he said to the man, who seemed in a
[576] great hurry.

"Thank you, tio. . . . "

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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Baikutu, Chief Fandya's village.

[Facing p. 90]

(Facing page 90)

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"I'll tell you how it is mostly," he went on, after a silence. "Sometimes a woman will lie about the father of her child. The child will grow up keeping the trefu of a strange man. But it won't be his real trefu. His mother, you see, lied about his father. In the end, if nothing is done, this child will be sick, and later he will become a leper. Only a bad woman will lie about her child's father, because only a bad woman will want to hurt her own child. It doesn't happen among the girls who wear kerchiefs and live the way the old people live. These girls dance to the spirits. They are afraid of the ancestors. They are afraid of their *akra*—their soul—and the Earth Mother. But those girls who wear hats—ai, Massa, those girls do anything!"

But here in the bush, it seemed, they had other beliefs about leprosy, he went on. Here they believed it was a kind of a spirit, too. When a leper died he was not given a good burial. No wakes were held for him. He was given no coffin. He was buried in the Bad Bush, where the sorcerers were thrown.

"When a leper dies, they don't want him to come back again. They don't treat his spirit well. They do the same with him as with a madman. They bury him with no more ceremony than a child, who came on earth, and would not stay. They say it's all because of a bad spirit, and they don't want bad spirits on earth."

4

"Why do we plant away from the village?"

It was the old woman talking, as we sat and smoked with her. The moon had come up above the maripa palm trees behind the house where the leper had been helped into his hammock, and it was pleasant out-of-doors.

"Why, you ask? Well, sometimes when the bush is burned, a wind comes up suddenly, and sends the flames, down, down, beyond the cleared ground. How would it be with a village, if we cleared our grounds too close to it, and this happened? No, Bak'a, we people of the bush know better. . . . What do you say? Why do we do our clearing

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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241 away from the river? When the big rains come, the river
361 goes up more and more. If our crops were too close to the water, then in the big rains the land would be flooded, and the crops long under water. . . . Yes, and we have to
[136] think of the ants, too. Ants, once they find their way into a
[137] field, will destroy everything. They like especially the green leaves of the young cassava plants. When the young leaves go, there is no cassava. So we move farther and farther away for our fields. Two, three years, and new fields must be cut, so that the yield might feed us all."

311 Once a field had been deserted, say, for five years, why
241 did they not reclaim it later? we enquired, for by that time the big bush would have made fertile again the soil that had been exhausted.

"In this bush we do it like that. Why, I don't know. Our ancestors found much land for us. When we want new fields, we cut farther and farther into the bush."

5

As Bayo and Angita set off for the dance at Pa'aba,
[521] Kasanya and Sedefo joined us, and we talked of crops and planting, of woman's work and man's, of good harvests and bad, and this is what was told us.

[462] Finding a new field and clearing it is a man's task. If a man is about to be married, or if the field a man's wife works has become exhausted, then he goes into the forest, near to the planting ground of his mother and to the fields of
311 his family, and casts about for a place to clear. A field
241 must not be in a hollow, or the crops will not grow, and
779 rice needs the sun of a hill slope to thrive. Once having found a spot where the drainage is good, he looks about to see if the spirits will allow its use. Patiently, painstakingly, he goes from one clump of matted vines to the next, machete in hand, searching for signs of an ant hill, or an Akatasi tree that is sacred to the gods of the ant hill, or for snakes, or a natural clearing belonging to the Apuku gods of the bush. No silk-cotton tree must be there, no loko tree wherein dwells the god of the same name so near that it

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1929) 1934
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Chapter IX

A NIGHT AT S'EI

I

[133] [137] FROM day to day the mood of the river changed, and the mood of the bush changed with it. The dankness of the river bank gave way to the smell of red, sun-scorched earth. No longer was the farther shore the forbidding wall of a great canyon. The flowering lianas, as they climbed a hundred feet and more from the roots of the trees they had enveloped, were making of it a tapestry. The blooms which showed against the masses of green seemed at first of the palest yellow with threads of white, or yellow with glints of gold in them, or the faintest of orange and violet. Later when the flaming gold, the scarlet and purple clusters appeared, they still did not mar the somber weave of the timeless pattern, for the deep note of this bush in any season is green, and no pushing, garish colors, no conceits of turning leaves or fragrant flowers can sound an echo here. As well expect the brilliantly tinted butterflies cruising from one bank to the other to make a [136] whir in their passage, as to look for it to be otherwise.

The air, however, became steadily drier, the green more varied and pleasing, and the land rising and sloping gave an occasional glimpse of a horizon. If something in the shade of the river banks still spoke of the way of the constrictor, the sudden lashing out of the tail, there was now also the pleasant consciousness of its long lethargy. The swish of wings overhead, when we walked for short intervals through

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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the uncleared bush, or the sight of a snake twined about a liana, no longer struck terror, and the flaying rains which came down so suddenly, and as suddenly were over, no longer even aroused uneasiness.

At the prow of our boat Bayo poled vigorously and continued his countless variants of the seketi song we had been hearing everywhere on the river, while Bibifo had made a refrain of our question, "How do you say this in your Saramacca language?" He would paddle in silence for a long time, only to begin muttering at the most unexpected moments, "Sa'macca tongo!" in the way of an old man who talks to himself. He would then repeat it over and over in ridicule of us, and sometimes in a singsong voice he would improvise lines about the white man who wanted to know how everything was called in the true, true Saramacca language, and how all that was told him he wrote down in a book.

"Great-grandfather," we would say to him, "why do you say this? Isn't it all right for us to want to learn how to talk to the G'aman?"

"*Kere-kere*—It's all right."

But having said this, he would engage Bayo in conversation, clipping his words, and using so much idiom and parable as utterly to confound us.

"Your language is difficult, great-grandfather."

"Ya-hai, it is meant for the people of the bush, white man," he would say with a pride we had not looked for from the mild Bibifo, who was now called Adrian. There was, it appeared, potency in the "word," and magic. The names for things, and the things themselves were one. The knowledge of Saramacca names belonged to the Saramacca people, and whether as Bibifo or Adrian, he was above all a Saramacca Negro, and a member of an important clan.

2

When we had been seven days on the river, our cook came to us and said he wanted to talk about something we had best know.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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bush for some months, and when he came back he did not feel well, and they quarreled often. When they quarreled she refused to cook for him, and so he said bad things to her. He began to say the child was not his. Now when a father takes away his 'kra, his soul, from the child while it is in the mother's womb, it is not good. When the child was born, it was a very small child. Afterwards the man left the woman. He still said the child was not his, but he used to bring money to the woman sometimes to buy things for the child. The neighbors said she must not take the money. If she took it, they said, the child would die of fio-fio. But the woman took the money. Nowadays many of them don't believe in the old things, until they [illegible]ut. When the child was four months old it died. Everybody knew it was fio-fio."

He told other incidents of what happened to people who had fio-fio.

"I tell you all this because sometimes the men in the boats talk about the whites, and they think you don't understand. But you know what they say, and you are angry. If you give them a present of leaf tobacco later, or rum, then they or you may become sick. . . . The men in the bush know what to do about fio-fio, Massa, and you must learn, too. The proverb says: 'How is a boat to go, if it has no paddles?'"

3

At the entrance to the village of S'ei a gigantic silk-cotton tree stood. Its trunk was massive, and the roots which projected outwards like so many buttresses made of it a great somber cathedral. The curiously twisted grooves which these buttresses made were said to house many spirits, and particularly the three who lived in the kankan tree, as the natives called it. Gedeonsu, the male god, and Tinné, his wife, lived there with their child Dyombie, the most dreaded of them all. The kankan tree gods were thought of as women's gods, though a few men might be found, here and there, who would, on occasion,

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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834 "Don't go off into the bush with a man. A child born to
848 you will have a bad bush god, if you do," she added as an afterthought.

5

123 In the other corner, Chief And'u, the bassia, and about
177 half a dozen men were talking of the great book about their ancestors which the white man had.

"It is large so," said the chief to one of the older men, indicating an imaginary size which multiplied the size of the actual volume at least tenfold. "And people say it has in it pictures of the Apuku gods, small as we ourselves know them, and a picture of the evil Apuku who appear as fire in the distance. . . . Mati, white men have gone into the Kromanti houses in the country of our ancestors and have made pictures!"

"It is impossible!"

"I want to see!"

The old man said, "I will not look. Books are not for us, mati."

"But mati, the G'aman has heard, and he wants to see."

The old man shook his head. He would have nothing of pictures that figured what should never have been allowed to be photographed.

It seemed prudent to give the conversation a new turn.
● 137 Down river, the men had said that a man of this village had lately found a new *neku* liana. Was it so?

"The man who found it was my son," said the old man, "you should have come for the dance. You would have seen
[802] how we do things here in the bush. But pictures you could not take. No, mati, if you photograph, you take the soul."

824 The festivities for the find had been especially joyful, he explained, for the boy had only recently come by his gods, and this had been yet another proof that he would serve his family capably. For though the find was his own, all
[208] his relatives in the mother's line would enjoy its use. Here-
[226] after, when the poison of its leaves and its slender branches

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

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A Saramacca elder,
who has Tiger spirit.

Bayo inspects an obia leaf.

[Facing P 332]

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

"OBIA COMES!"

The river had fallen. Whole stretches appeared as dry as the sandy village clearings. The green-heart trees were in full bloom, looking like giant flowering mimosas with heads lifted high above the green wall of matted bush. As we sped past the village landing of Gankwe, women washing their clothes and children at play called out a last "*Adiosio-o-o-o*," but in a moment we rounded a bend of the river and were out of sight.

Our only stop was at New Village, not far from the railroad, where the chief had promised to have an apinti for us. He was expecting us, and with him was his friend, the chief of Kadyu, whose village lay below the railhead.

"I had trouble finding a skin for the head," he said, "but one of my men shot a deer, and so I have a fine one for you. . . . And here is an obia to keep you alive on the water." He transferred the power of the obia to us, and then, as we rose to leave, he added, "When you get to your home, tell the headman of your village 'Howdo' in the name of the Chief of New Village, and his friend, the Chief of Kadyu."

9

As we floated up to the landing place where men were waiting to take our boxes to the train, we saw an hibiscus tree in bloom before the little shop kept by a British Guiana mulatto who did some trading with the Bush Negroes.

"What do you call this tree, Bayo?"

"Which one, this with the red flowers? I don't know. That's a Bak'a sani—a white man's thing."

Bakra sani!

The hibiscus tree, the mulatto who for the Bush Negro is also a Bakra, ourselves and our phonograph and flashlights—all were white men's things, intruders in his bush, strangers. Only by the grace of his powerful ancestors, and of the gods of his ancestors, might such things be allowed life and a measure of joy there, as witness the bright blossoms, the livelihood the mulatto earned, and our own good health.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

562 the river—the glinting light on the black skins, shining with sweat and spray, and the veined muscles that roll and subside as the dripping pole goes down, first one end and then the other, into the yellow water. Hour after hour they strain their bodies against the bending poles. Without warning a [132] heavy tropical downpour will blanket the river with sheets of rain, but the *corials* (canoes) go on. When the rain stops the hot sun quickly dries the black skins.

137 All along the river the foliage towers upward from the 502 water's edge. Great trees rear high their masses of limbs and verdure. Going upstream the boatmen stay close to the bank, for there the current, checked by myriads of roots, is not so swift. Often the men can reach out of the corial and touch the foliage. In sharp contrast with this green is the brown colour of the muddy stream. The sunlight glares on the surface, except where the overhanging wall of trees throws a shade upon the water. The black boatmen blend in with the yellow river, the green foliage, and the metallic sky.

136 Parrots scream overhead. A pair of scarlet macaws cackle at each other. Leaping fish shimmer in the sunlight, falling back into the river with a white splash. Bats from underneath logs, disturbed by human intrusion, disappear into the bank a hundred feet ahead. The corials are eyed intently by parakeets feeding high up in the air, perched on tree limbs along the bank. Little black and white swallow-like skimmers scurry over the water just forward of the bow, which keeps pushing on through the white riffles. Huge water-fowl flap their wide wings and sail gracefully away.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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Palm Fronds Recently Cut to be Used for Thatching a Hut.
Boni Tribe, French Guiana.

[Facing p. 50]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

The blacks admire the bahkra's shotgun and rifle—beautiful, well-oiled weapons which they love. They gaze through the barrel of the shotgun to see the clean bore, and make a comparison with their own meagre, fouled guns. They sniff at the rifle, however, because it shoots only one bullet. How can a man get game with a single ball? Explanations of the high power of the shell produce no effect upon them.

We load. Canned goods, rice, bacon, tobacco, coffee—enough for five days. The provisions are packed in the wicker rucksacks, along with hammocks. The start is made. Walking through the village, the packers exchange jests with Negro women who pause to watch us go by. The hunters are teased regarding the amount of game they will bring back.

After a half-mile walk we reach the new cassava fields in back of the village at a quarter of six, as the sun is rising. The women are already at work. Beyond lies the game trail. It is simply a slight path through the jungle brush, with occasional pools of water through which we wade. Idle toucans eye us from nearby palm trees. A flurry in the bush off to the right indicates the escape of an agouti, but we are not quick enough to see it. The agouti is a kind of giant guinea pig, called by the natives *cony-cony*, meaning "cunning-cunning," because it is hard to outwit. The Bush Negroes are eager to get some of this sweet, succulent meat.

Within an hour the last cassava field is left far behind and we are in the "high bush." The tops of giant trees are lost to sight a hundred and fifty feet overhead. Their massive trunks are buttressed with branches that have grown back

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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224 into the ground, becoming roots. The jungle vines, the lianas,
648 twine about the boles of palms, adding to the tangle of leaves.
● 137 The jungle is one immense struggle, none the less fierce because it is silent. The foliage is fighting for light and air.

224 We wade across a number of small creeks that bar our
648 path. Beautiful flat-winged butterflies hover in the hot air. The drone of other insects continues until our ears become accommodated to the sound and we no longer hear it. For five hours the trek continues.

At eleven o'clock a halt is called for lunch. The Djukas
[482] drop their fifty-pound packs, under which they have trotted more easily than the white with only a gun and canteen. A little fire is started and we begin to eat. The creek beside the camp has no name; it is known only as a small tributary of the Lombe Creek. This is the occasion for a little ceremony. The stream is to be named after the first person to eat beside it, which in this case is a white man. A Bush Negro takes a mouthful of water from the creek and spits it back, motioning us to do the same. We comply. Then the Negro names the stream *"Datra Cong Creekee"*—"Doctor Kahn Creek." The others respond with solemnity, "Daso." We pass a few pleasantries and go on.

By two o'clock the fatigue is beginning to tell on the bahkra. A halt is called. The country gets higher as we leave
[33] the neighbourhood of the river, but the bush does not thin out. The ground is rolling, with knolls fifty feet high. Up these the carriers scramble like goats, despite their load, but Daniels says they are going slow because of the bahkra. Be-

/138 cont./
241 825 particular suffers greatly from this type of ant, but maize, tajer, and bananas are also eaten. This plague is so serious that the clearing of a new ground is partially determined by the occurrence of the nests of these ants at the place. Normally these nests lie fairly far apart in the forest, but as soon as the crops of the grounds come within the domain of the ants, the nests grow rampantly. In addition, at just about planting time the ants produce numerous sexual forms, which, as a result of the cleared lands, have a favorable opportunity to swarm and found new colonies. The leaf-cutting ants are therefore "Kulturfolger" /followers of culture/.

As a result of this plague of ants, it is usually not possible for the Bush Negroes to cut extensions to the existing grounds for longer than two to three years. After all, the kapoeweri of the abandoned pieces of ground functions then as a hiding place for the younger ant-nests, and one drags, as it were, the ant plague along with one. There is no combating the ants, and through impotence the Bush Negro is forced to yield the field. This flight before the ants consists in the search for new grounds farther into the bush or, in case this is no longer possible for some reason, in the occupation of new lands elsewhere along the river.

●137 136 /139/ Stahel (1) has pointed to the fact that among the Bush

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1. Het Bosnegervraagstuk en het Coronieplan /The Bush Negro Question and the Coronie Plan/, Department Landbouwproefstation Surinam /Department of Agriculture Research Station, Surinam/, Report No. 9, October, 1944, 2[illegible]

Negroes the older grounds change into a low secon[illegible]lled by him "ant-kapoeweri" /ant-bush/. In effect, in [illegible] pla[illegible]s where a dense Bush Negro population is found, such a strip of second growth occurs along the rivers. According to Stahel, this inferior bush comes about through the presence of the great nests of leaf-cutting ants. Ac- 13 [114] cording to his calculation, at a density of six ant nests per hectare (a maximum which is confirmed in the vicinity of Paramaribo, but which, according to my own observations in the Bush Negro lands,

/139 cont./

13 seems too high to me), the ants can bring into the soil each year two to three tons of leaf material per hectare. As a result the soil would be so enriched with humus and, in addition, through the construction of the numerous nest corridors, receive so much extra ventilation that the oxygen content and the microbiological condition of this soil would tend to differ from the mineral soils in which the virgin forest is rooted. As proof of this, it is stated "that even the oldest ant-kapoeweri directly behind the villages shows no tendency to grow into normal high forest" (p. 13).

114 It does not seem correct to me to ascribe this kapoeweri
●137 phenomenon only to the presence and the activity of the leaf-
136 cutting ants. In my opinion the ants here constitute a troublesome contributing factor, for when the virgin-forest grounds are abandoned by the population and no new food material is available to the ants while the kapoeweri gradually grows into higher forest, then the balance in the ant population re-establishes itself. This process takes place at a slow rate, depending on the local circumstances, but it leads to the re-establishment of the original situation. There is, however, one condition connected with it, namely, that the forest be left in peace for a long enough stretch.
241 Now this last is not the case for the grounds area of the Bush Negroes.
134 They return too soon (within ten years) to clear grounds again, with the consequence that the soil becomes too exhausted and the recovery of the forest becomes impossible.

171 Proof for this viewpoint is already provided by Stahel (loc.
241 cit.) in his consideration of the agriculture of the upland Indians.
137 The absence of the ant-kopoeweri there is not a matter of a lesser
[136] ant infestation, as Stahel /140/ believes -- for in places this is equally serious -- but of a less intensive use of the forest lands.
[161] The Indians are present in small numbers (a few hundred, as against
423] thousands of Bush Negroes), while only communal plots are laid
[361] out for one village, and not different ones for each family. In addition, the Indians move frequently in order to find new hunting and fishing grounds.

/140 cont./

241 There is yet another factor which plays a role in the origin
134 of the grounds-kapoeweri. This is the use of fire in clearing the
137 ground. The burning of the cut forest is done at the expense of the humus on and in the soil. The fertilization with ashes that one obtains by it only partially covers this loss. Furthermore, under the influence of the fire there are great disturbances in the balance of the microflora and fauna of the soil, hindering the conversion of organic materials into inorganic compounds. Sun and rain bring changes in the structure of the scorched earth, which forms a cement-like crust and becomes sealed. Also the growing of cultivated crops, especially cassave, draws many mineral components from the soil.

13 It is clear that the soil needs time to recover after this disturbance of the balance. This period of time is estimated at 25-30 years. The leaf-cutting ants play a part in this; they again enrich the soil with humus by bringing great quantities of leaves into their ground nests. In addition, they ventilate the soil by digging numerous nest corridors. In this manner the ants contribute
[242] to the recovery. It is well-known, moreover, that the soil on old leaf-cutting ant nests is fertile; one likes to plant bananas on it. If we assume with Stahel that in this kapoeweri six ant nests per hectare are found, then these nests together would only have a maximum surface of one-tenth of it. This would never be able to hinder the full growth of the forest.

136 That the leaf cutting ants occupy the secondary growth, or at
137 least are present there in greater numbers than is normally the case
241 in the forest, may be a consequence of the laying out of new grounds within their domain. Because of the lack of land, the Bush Negroes are constantly trying to lay out grounds again in this forest. The ants, moreover can maintain themselves because there are various forest trees that supply the ants with sufficient leaf material.

13 Thus, because of both the decreased capacity of the soil and
311 the presence of the leaf-cutting ants, the ant-kapoeweri forms a terrain that has become unusable for present-day primitive Bush Negro agriculture./141/ And from the standpoint of forestry too the ant-kapoeweri is worthless.

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Fig. 1. Ground of a Paramaccaner on a hill beside the river. For want of flat terrain, the slopes of hills are used. The surroundings are second growth. -- Marowijne near Grankreck, Oct. 1952.

[311]

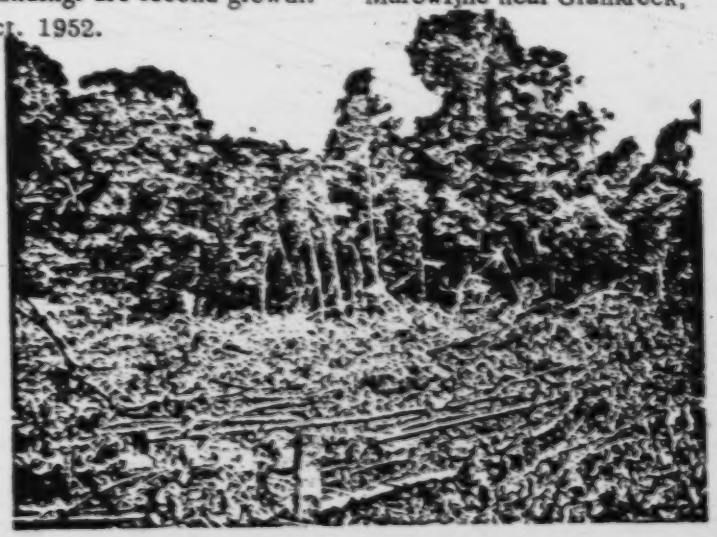

Fig. 2. Newly laid-out ground of an Aucaner, in young second growth. The slender trunks are typical. -- Tapanahoni, Saniki, Oct. 1952.

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Fig. 3. Ground on the slopes of the Malobbi range. The surroundings are primary virgin forest; in the distance, the Lely range. -- Tapanahoni, Malobbi, Oct. 1952.

Fig. 4. Newly cleared ground along the river, on a steep slope. The danger of erosion is great. The surroundings are second growth. -- Marowijne near Grankreek, Oct. 1952.

- 4: Geijskes--16 G,N-5 (1952) 1954 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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Fig. 5. Virgin forest in the Malobbi range, with severe fire-scars from a food-ground (in the foreground). -- Tapanahoni, Malobbi, Oct. 1952.

Fig. 6. Food-ground on river terrace, planted for three months. In the foreground, rice and cassava, behind them maize. The surroundings are kapoeweri and, at the right, high second growth Tapanahoni, Drietabbetje, March, 1952.

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Fig. 7. Ten-month-old food-ground with high cassava. On the right, kapoeweri; weeds in the foreground. -- Tapanahoni, Drietabbetje, Oct. 1952.

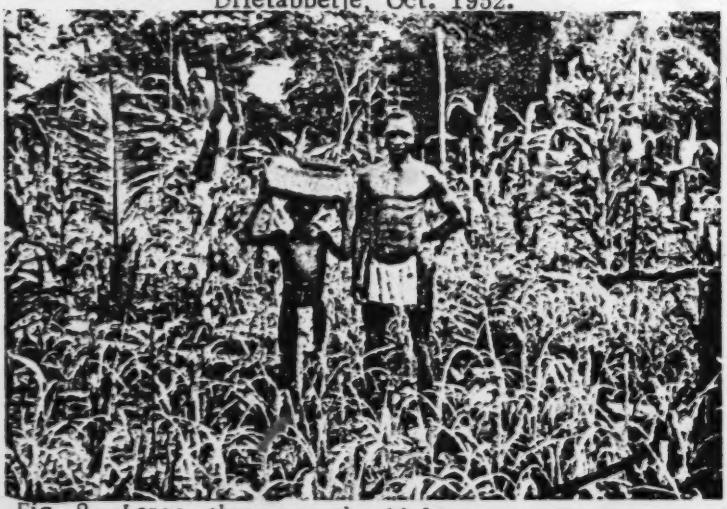

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Fig. 8. Large, three-month-old food-ground with harvestable maize and watermelons. Rice in the foreground. -- Tapanahoni, Drietabbetje, March 1952.

B /512 cont./
R
137 The region is entirely covered by equatorial forest which the
241 inhabitants clear for their crops, practicing a shifting agriculture on burned-over land.
B
2 Life is closely tied to the river, on the edge of which are
311 established villages and crops. They scarcely move except by
504 water. Everybody, man, woman, or child, has his pirogue, and
868 the children learn to paddle at the same time that they learn to
B walk.
R
433 The principal activities of the two populations are agriculture,
B fishing, and canoeing.
R
262 There is scarcely any difference between the dietary resources of the Indians and the Boni. The principal portion is manioc, eaten in the form of cassave (flat cakes cooked on a plate) or of couac (roasted and granulated flour). Then come tubers, yams,
B dasheens, "Carib cabbage" /taro/ and sweet potatoes, bananas
[241] and plantains. The Boni in addition plant mountain rice, from which the yield is small; in return, they eat fewer bananas.
R
[226] The protein ration is furnished essentially by fish, eaten fresh or smoked. The Indians, skillful fishermen, never lack
B them. Game furnishes a less regular, but important resource.
R
[231] Animal husbandry, confined to a few chickens raised mainly to sell, represents only an insignificant part of the diet.
[439] The fat from fish and from animals killed while hunting constitutes the principal portion of lipides. The Boni use in addition, for preparing their meals, a small quantity of maripa palm oil.

Vitamins come from fruit (papaya, pineapple, mangoes), which the Indians eat in greater abundance than the Blacks, from wild spinach, rich in Vitamin A, and palm nuts (awara and caumou),
B eaten in great abundance during the rainy season.
R
146 Neither of the two populations is undernourished. The Indians might have been so temporarily during epidemics, when the adults, having been sick for a long time, were unable to clear sufficient land. But they can supplement an inadequate harvest with a great variety of wild foods that can be gathered.

The diet seems poor in mineral elements and especially in calcium. Traces of rachitis are noticeable among some of the Indian children.

/6 cont./

133 Flooding is very variable according to the configuration of the rivers and the nature of the terrain.

133 At the Creole village of Grigel, situated at the bottom of
361 a glove-finger loop of the Waki River, the June flooding reaches
171 a level of eight meters above the average level in the dry season; the Creole and Indian villages of the Waki are established on hills. On the contrary, along the Lawa whose course is rectilinear, the variation in level is seldom greater than four meters. The maximum water level is 50 centimeters to one meter /above/ the soil of the alluvial terrace. Several of the Creole and Boni villages of the Lawa are even established at the very edge of the great river; the houses are built on piles and their occupants go home by boat during several weeks of the year. Nevertheless, most of the villages and farming habitations are outside the reach of flooding on terraces situated about five meters above the high-water mark, which are found from place to place at the edge of the river and which perhaps mark vestiges of an ancient terrace. This is notably the case with Boniville and Loka villages.

[342] [484]

•137 The whole of the territory is entirely covered by equatorial forest: a forest continuous and dense which extends over hundreds of kilometers without a village, without a clearing, without a trail.

The Guiana forest is less high than is ordinarily thought. It is an infinite succession of trees of all dimensions and of extremely varied species, among which true giants are rare; the average height of the cover is around 30 meters, and large trunks are rare.

824 The variety of species is very great; and the useful ones, few in number and dispersed, are difficult to exploit. The Refugee Blacks, who have a deep knowledge of the forest and its resources, utilize scarcely ten species out of the some 200 which they differentiate, judging the others unusable either because their

/6 cont./

824 wood is too hard to be worked with ordinary instruments or, on the contrary, because it is too soft, too easily attacked by insects, or
311 has a tendency to rot. The zone exploitable by native procedures is limited (for the floodable zones /7/ do not allow fine woods) to the slope of the hills bordering the valley of the watercourses accessible to pirogues; beyond, the cartage of felled trunks becomes impracticable.

● 137 A very dense epiphytic vegetation connects the trees with
136 their upper parts; it is there that life blossoms out: flowers, birds, insects, and monkeys.

484 Progress through the forest is very arduous. The undergrowth,
487 shrubs, bushes, bound together by fine and elastic lianas, offers
[132] a constant obstacle, the machete /sabre/ must be wielded at each
[412] step. The nature of the terrain, a succession of bogs and hills
[133] with steep and slippery slopes, makes walking for heavily loaded men exhausting. On the trail one succeeds with difficulty in making more than 15 to 20 kilometers a day; in the uninhabited forest one can scarcely advance five to six kilometers a day by cutting the strict minimum as one does when hunting. The opening of a route permitting the passage of heavily laden men cannot progress more than three kilometers a day on the average.

137 The great forest offers few real dangers, but it is an environ-
182 ment profoundly hostile to man, which does not present spontaneously any food resource and allows establishment of villages and cultivated areas only at the price of great efforts.

136 One meets few animals in the interior of the forest, and the resources for hunting are very limited; on the other hand, there are few harmful animals; wild beasts are few and practically do not appear; snakes are much rarer than on the coast and represent
164 only a slight danger. The most real dangers of the forest come from the fall of branches and epiphytes, principally when it is cleared for cultivation; each year there are accidents of this kind in Boni country. Besides, work in the forest is the occasion for many wounds which tend to ulcerate.

6.Hurault--58a K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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Fig. 5. Boni Village

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Fig. 6. The fraga
tiki of the Kotika
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351 [134] [241] There are no gardens around the cabins because the conditions of the soil and climate render permanent cultivation impracticable. The nearest thing is a few persons planting some banana trees around the hut at the foot of which they spread the hearth ashes. As a general rule villages are closely hemmed in by secondary brushwood, and people plant far from one another and sometimes very far from the village.

361 137 311

423 824 If it does not admit the appropriation of land to individuals, custom does admit, on the other hand, the ownership of trees. In the villages the useful trees (coconut trees, maripa palms /attalea excelsa/, mango trees, cashew-apple trees, etc.) all have owners. The tree is considered as personal property and is transmitted by inheritance in the same way as a gun or a canoe.

[428]

428 824 613 The procedure employed by the Boni for the dispersion of the inheritance among the members of the lineage of the dead man sometimes has the effect of transmitting the ownership of a tree to a person who is not of the village. For example, in Boniville where a fraction of the Kotika lineage lives, two caumou palms were bequeathed a long time ago to members of the lineage living in Kotika, who come each year to gather the fruit.

[222]

Appendix

173 [125] Local Chronology Used for Determining Ages

1876 Death of Grand Man Atyaba.

1877 Trip of the explorer Crevaux from the Maroni to the Yari and the Amazon, in the company of Apatu, head of the Boni village.

[62] [36] 1882 Apatu secedes, taking with him about 150 persons and founds the village which bears his name on the lower course of the Maroni.

6:Hurault--166a K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

/facing p. 114/

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Fig. 19. Fishing à la nivrée.

6:Hurault--412a K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes.SR8
Boni

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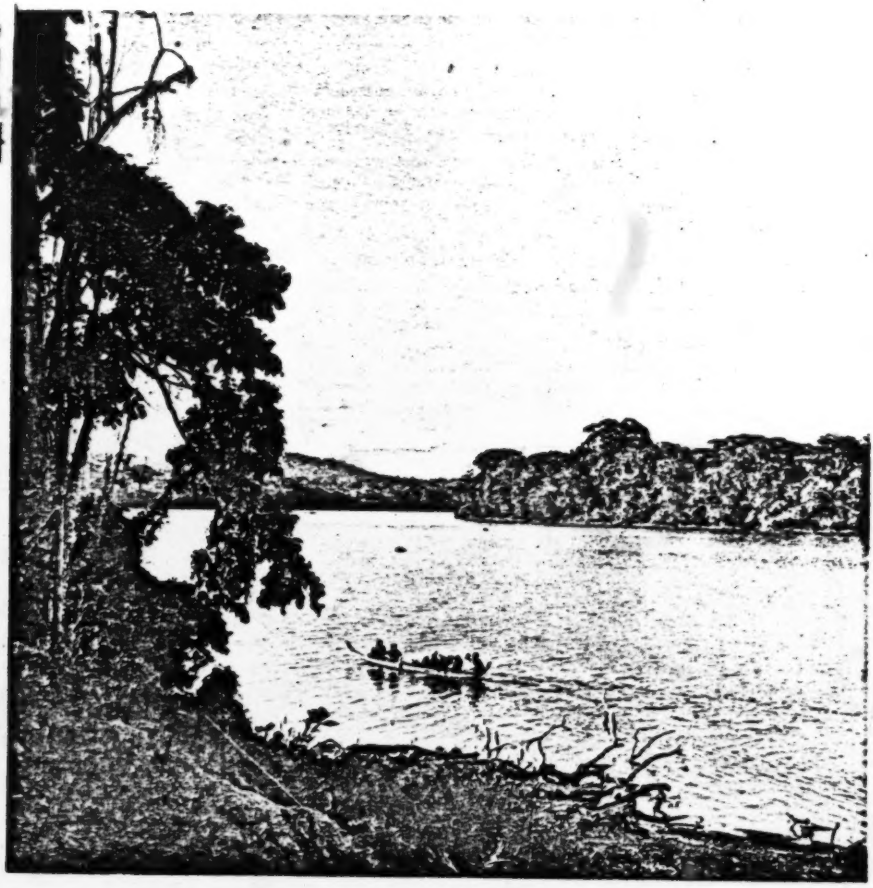

Fig. 29. The last trip of a dead person on the river.